

## QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE POVERTY SYMPOSIUM MAY 10, 2007

### **EDUCATION**

1. Are they teaching students what we are talking about today?  
Educating them about how they need education to succeed and a diploma is not enough anymore.  
Hold them accountable for their future.

*Not as much as we should be teaching students especially if we are referring to soft skills, independent living skills or career skills. This is certainly not the fault of the classroom teacher but instead the demands of the educational system, especially at the national and state level. The demands of standardized tests that are given on a regular basis throughout the school (from October through May) year have many teachers teaching to the test which, as we all know, is not necessary the rigorous and relevant factors of school. The alignment of standards to the curriculum does not allow for too much creativity and with the mobility of our students, staff members want to make sure that students can maintain their grades, as well as enthusiasm, when we transfer from school to school.*

*Most of your soft skills are taught in the ROP classes because it is easier to demonstrate the connection from a job skill to the work world that to demonstrate the connection of the standards to the work world.*

*Most, if not all students, are aware that postsecondary education is evident if they are to survive in the world of high priced houses, expensive cars, and just being able to purchase the bare necessities to life. Students in poverty see other students in poverty and feel as hopeless as they do. We do not market the success of those who made it in spite of their many challenges. Students who look at successful adults do not necessarily see themselves in these positions.*

***Margaret Hill, Interim Assistant Superintendent, County Superintendent of Schools***

2. How are we to address poverty when we continue to exclude them from the discussion and in helping to create solutions?  
Families are “stressed” and need relief in order to acclimate to higher learning and other opportunities.

*Our societal role is to promote success and provide a map for change. We need to look at the way we expend funds so they can support the strategies that we know work. For example, if we really want students in poverty to attend college, arrange to transport their parents to tour campuses. This will give the parents an opportunity to understand the importance of receiving a good education. Students usually support those things that parents support.*

**Margaret Hill, Interim Assistant Superintendent, County Superintendent of Schools**

3. Yes, work with children. Yes, encourage them.  
But is not some sort of outreach to parent necessary? How can children cope with two different sets of role models – educators who believe and parents who seem to have withdrawn from hope/trying?

*There are two parts to the first question. One has to re-establishing the dignity of work and that all jobs are valued in our society. We cannot get people out of poverty by making them all professionals with a four year degree. Many American jobs go begging that require technical skills with two years or less of college, trade schools or apprenticeship.*

*Jobs require specific skills (competencies) these now require higher order skills in math, communication and people skills. After that we have a demand by employers that a worker bring a work ethic to the job that will serve both the business needs and the employee needs. This is where American education needs to focus.*

*\* Getting parent involvement and support is very important. This is why pre-school education is important and the parent involvement piece of the Alliance is aimed at this problem. The community needs to get together and promote job dignity and value all our children if we are to maintain a viable economy.*

**Don Averill, Chancellor, San Bernardino Community College District**

*If we intend to change attitudes of students, we better change the attitudes of parents. Most of these are the same parents who were not successful in our schools. Why can't we support (intellectually and financially) a parent conference that is run by the parents?*

*Students do not have two sets of role models but they can look at parents and figure out the chances are greater being like them more than professional/career people they don't know.*

**Margaret Hill, Interim Assistant Superintendent, County Superintendent of Schools**

## **EMPLOYMENT**

1. Do cities and the county give any consideration to hiring those who reside in the zip code they serve?  
Is this data collected and/or monitored?  
The idea of being vested in the community.
2. What do you do for the client that comes in to you with the felonies and drug history that is now looking for jobs?

## **HEALTH**

1. What concerns me are students who have graduated from college/university and are looking for employment but meanwhile are without health insurance – they don't qualify under the parent insurance and cannot afford to purchase health insurance 21 – over.  
My daughter graduated a year ago and has not been hired by a job with health insurance.  
Please let me know what we do about this?
2. How does Inland Empire get a voice in coastal shipping/transport/health dialogue?

## **HOUSING**

1. Recidivism rate or return of mentally ill in and out of Arrowhead Hospital-- stay on the street for two weeks in motel out of \$ return back to hospital. Because of depression no place to stay.  
Board and care operators and room and board operators taking clients in for a few days, then throw them out with no money back on streets back to Arrowhead. Then ship to City of Angels in Rosemead. This problem needs to stop. Need housing for mentally ill.
2. We need to address rising costs of homeowners insurance and property taxes as barriers to homeownership.
3. Are you seeing or anticipating a trend in large Section 8 housing developments withdrawing from Section 8?  
How will this be countered or corrected?

## **CRIME PREVENTION/REHABILITATION**

1. What about former incarcerated felony people?

*The Sheriff's Dept. has a partnership with the Department of Workforce Development whereby 2 employment services specialists provide community case management services for up to a year after release. The community caseworkers are housed at the jail but work at each of the Employment Resource Centers throughout the county to assist in finding employment.*

*Miriam Gomez, Program Coordinator, Sheriff's Department*

### **GENERAL POVERTY**

1. I heard everyone talking about lack of education, no opportunities, and no jobs available . . .  
No one once mentioned what role the "PARENTS" play in preventing poverty. Instilling ambition, goals, ethics, etc. Society is now playing the parent and is holding the responsibility in getting people out of poverty. It needs to start in the home. Where is the parent programs?
2. If the numbers of people in San Bernardino County that are on Welfare are down, why are the numbers of families rising in community food box programs? When I took over our food box program four years ago, we were serving 20-25 families a month. We are currently serving 100-125 families and are still growing.
3. Are people in poverty condition being invited to this dialogue/problem solving effort?  
Have people in poverty been invited to say what they perceive as needed?
4. Would the panelist agree with me that we need to move towards moderation in our California government? i.e., we need to balance the legislators with 50% Democrats and 50% Republicans.
5. Tom is 37 years old. He lives in Yucaipa. When he was 18, he had a terrible motorcycle accident that caused his heart to rupture, mobility problems from broken bones: legs and foot, speech impediment and neurological damage from traumatic brain injury. His only income is Social Security, about \$700/month, but his mother is the payee. She does not give him more than \$20 per week. (Could you live on that?) He has been fighting his own poverty and working towards self-sufficiency for years. So far, no one will hire him. He has no skills. The best chance for him is through Job Corps, which requires 14 specific documents for an interview with a counselor. A man with TBI cannot, by definition, maintain or locate important documents. This is exactly where bureaucracy needs

to meet reality. Tom has only a bicycle and the bus system for transportation. However, he must beg his folks for bus fare each and every time.

When we, all together, can lift this man out of poverty, then we will have succeeded. Then, we will have solved the worst off.

Use this person as your example when you design and implement projects, programs, assistance. Is this man to stay in poverty or not?

*Someone in Tom's circumstances needs personal assistance and intervention. The State of California has established a number of "Regional Centers" whose mission is to assist disabled persons and their families. Each client or "consumer" is given a case manger. The case managers are responsible for meeting with the clients and families to develop an assistance plan. The case manager can assist in making referrals and contracting for needed services. The Regional Center in San Bernardino County is located on Brier Drive in San Bernardino. Other agencies in the San Bernardino area specialize in assisting disabled persons. Among these are Rolling Start, Inc. and the Center for Individual Development. Additionally there are a number of sheltered workshops in the area that provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The question for Tom is not so much, "Is there help?" Rather, "Where is the help that fits the specific need?" This is where the 211 System comes in. A person dials 211 for social service assistance information. The 211 operator is trained in providing information to the caller about service providers in the area who can possibly assist. If knowledge is the key to overcoming impoverishing difficulties, the 211 System can be a powerful resource for those who take advantage of it.*

*Dave Larsen, Interim Deputy Director, Department of Community Development and Housing (909) 388-0959*